

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5649

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

USMISSION NATO

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES

EUCOM

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 9156

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, TU

SUBJECT: "CENTRISTS" RETAIN CONTROL OF REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY

REF: ANKARA 9107 (DTG 301440Z NOV 76)

1. THE FINAL EVENT OF THE 23RD NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE  
REPUBLICAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (RPP) -- THE ELECTION OF A NEW  
GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD -- TURNED OUT TO BE A RESOUNDING  
VICTORY FOR THE CENTRIST ELEMENT LED BY PARTY SECRETARY GENERAL  
ORHAN EYUBOGLU, WHICH SWEPT ALL 20 POSITIONS.

2. IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RESULTS OF THE  
ELECTION, PARTY CHAIRMAN ECEVIT CALLED THE FIRST MEETING OF  
THE NEW GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD AT WHICH ORHAN EYUBOGLU  
WAS REELECTED SECRETARY GENERAL AND HASAN ESAT ISIK, ALI TOPUZ,  
MUSTAFA USTUNDAG AND ISMAIL HAKKI BIRLER WERE ELECTED DEPUTY  
SECRETARIES GENERAL. (PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD BEEN ONLY TWO  
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DEPUTY SECRETARY POSITIONS. THESE HAD BEEN OCCUPIED BY ISIK

AND TOPUZ).

3. COMMENT: THE SEVERAL MONTHS-LONG STRUGGLE FOR CONTROL OF THE RPP MACHINERY HAS ENDED WITH A VICTORY FOR THE INCUMBENTS. THE CHALLENGE MOUNTED BY FORMER FINANCE MINISTER AND DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL DENIZ BAYKAL WAS A STRONG ONE, BUT FELL WELL SHORT OF THE MARK. THE AVERAGE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN EYUGOGLU'S LIST AND BAYKAL'S LIST WAS 130 VOTES OUT OF APPROXIMATELY 1380 CAST. BAYKAL HAD RUN AN EFFECTIVE RACE IN THE FACE OF VERY DIFFICULT ODDS. THE RPP PARTY MACHINERY HAS HISTORICALLY BEEN CONTROLLED BY PARTY PROFESSIONALS IN ANKARA AND BAYKAL'S FAILURE IS EVIDENCE THAT THAT CONTROL REMAINS FIRM. THE RESULTS OF THE ELECTION ALSO SUGGEST THAT THE SPLIT WITHIN THE PARTY IS DEEP AND WILL BE DIFFICULT TO BRIDGE. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER TURAN GUNES AND FORMER EDUCATION MINISTER AND PARTY DEPUTY SECRETARY GENERAL USTUNDAG, WHO WERE ON BOTH LISTS, NO CANDIDATE DREW VOTES FROM THE OPPOSITION FACTION. IN FACT, GUNES WITH 893 VOTES AND USTUNDAG WITH 879 VOTES DID NOT WIN OVERWHELMING SUPPORT FROM BOTH GROUPS. THE FACT THAT BAYKAL AND HIS SUPPORTERS, WHO INCLUDE SOME VERY PROMINENT RPP DEPUTIES, WERE COMPLETELY SHUT OUT IN THE RACE FOR THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD WILL PERHAPS MAKE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PARTY LESS COMPLICATED, BUT IT IS ALSO LIKELY THAT THE SPLIT BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS WILL GROW EVEN WIDER. PARTY CHAIRMAN ECEVIT CLEARLY HAS HIS WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM. IN A BRIEF STATEMENT AFTER HIS REELECTION AS PARTY CHAIRMAN, ECEVIT SAID THAT DESPITE THE ARGUMENTS AT THE CONGRESS, THE PARTY WAS STRONGER THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN. MOST OBSERVERS, INCLUDING THE NORMALLY SYMPATHETIC PRESS, DISAGREE.

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